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AEWG Guide to the Accelerated Education Principles

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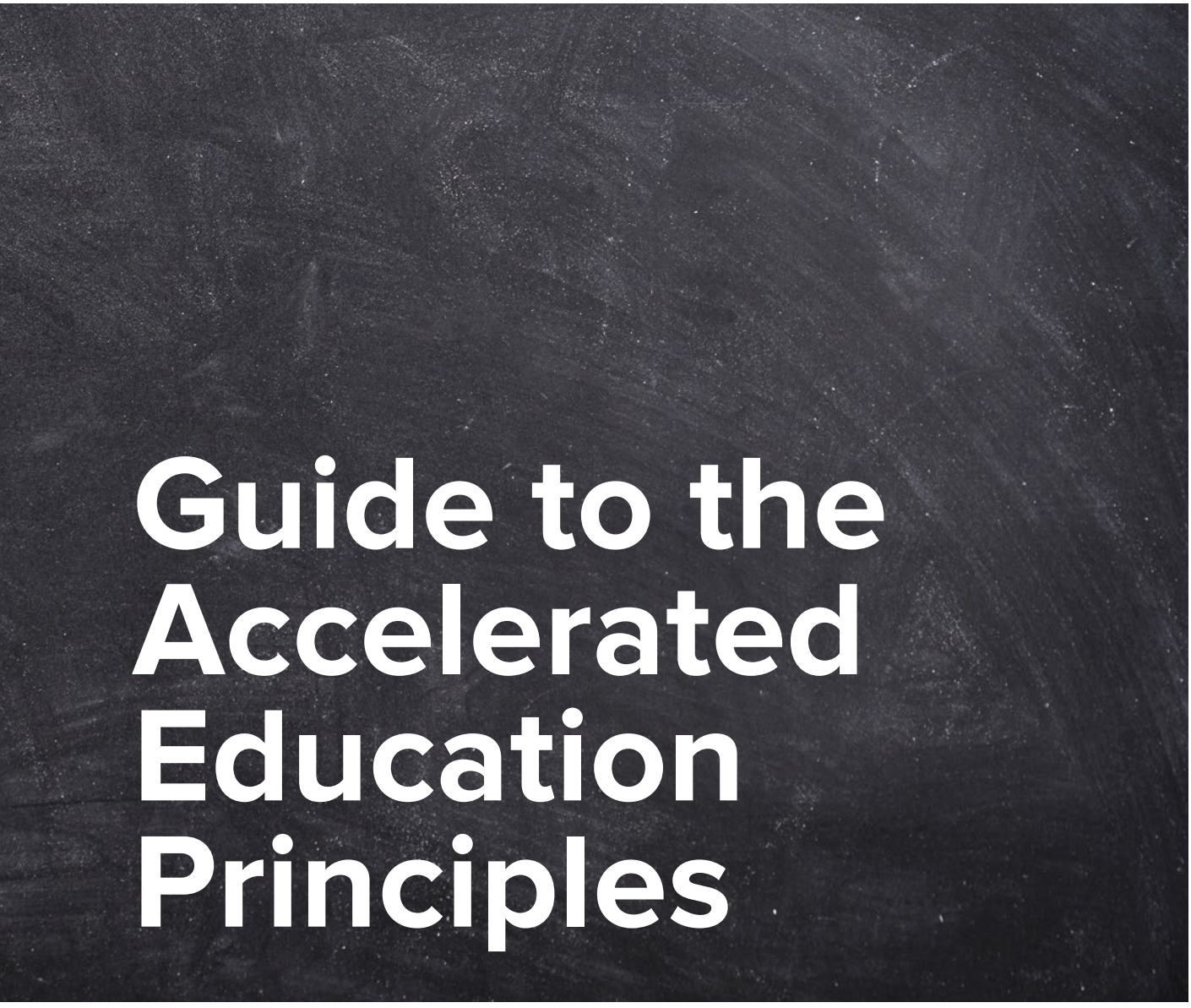
ACCELERATED EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

GUIDE



Guide to the Accelerated Education Principles

REVISED October 2017

A guide for Accelerated Education Programme designers, implementers, evaluators and agencies

Acknowledgements

This Guide was originally written and edited by Juliette Myers, Helen Pinnock and Ingrid Lewis of the Enabling Education Network (EENET), for the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG). It was later revised, following field testing and feedback from expert reviews, by Kayla Boisvert, Jennifer Flemming and Ritesh Shah.

The Accelerated Education Working Group is made up of the following members:

- **UNHCR**
- **UNICEF**
- **UNESCO**
- **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**
- **Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN)**
- **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**
- **Plan International**
- **International Rescue Committee (IRC)**
- **Save the Children**
- **War Child Holland**

The AEWG is a working group made up of education partners working in Accelerated Education. The AEWG is currently led by UNHCR with representation from UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, NRC, Plan, IRC, Save the Children, Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) and War Child Holland. The AEWG brings agencies together to share experiences and expertise in Accelerated Education and provides an opportunity for dialogue around a more harmonised, standardised approach. Based on the aim for a more standardised approach the AEWG has begun to develop guidance materials based on international standards and sound practice.

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Acronyms

AE	Accelerated Education
AEP	Accelerated Education Programme
AEWG	Accelerated Education Working Group
AL	Accelerated Learning
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
APEP	Afghanistan Primary Education Programme
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBO	community-based organisation
CEC	community education committee
CBEC	community-based education centre
CiC	Children in Crisis
DfID	Department for International Development
ERSA	Education Recovery Support Activity
EMIS	education management information system
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IASC	Inter-agency Standing Committee
IDP	internally displaced person
IRC	International Rescue Committee
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
LFL	Learning for Life
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MTBMLE	mother-tongue-based multilingual education
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PTA	parent–teacher association
RET	Relief and Resilience through Education in Transition (formerly Refugee Education Trust)
SC	Save the Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TEP	Teacher Emergency Package (from NRC)
TPSTCC	Training for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Introduction

Global commitments and Accelerated Education Programmes

Globally, over 263 million children and adolescents are out of school. This includes children who never started school or who dropped out after enrolment (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2016). The most vulnerable and marginalised – often displaced children and young people, ex-combatants, girls and children with disabilities – are more likely to find it difficult to get an education. Fifty-one per cent of refugees are under 18, and only half of refugee children are in primary school (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNHCR], 2016).

Education not only provides vital basic skills and competencies, but offers stability, security and the promise of long-term peace. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education 2030: Framework for Action have set a global compact to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education for all" (p. iii).

For children and young people who have missed out on education or had their education interrupted by conflict, crisis, poverty and marginalisation, Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) are a way to realise this commitment. AEPs offer equivalent, certified competencies for basic education, enabling a return to formal education at age-appropriate grades, or transition into work or other training.

What is Accelerated Education?

According to the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), an Accelerated Education Programme[1] is:

A flexible, age-appropriate programme, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aims to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth. This may include those who missed out on or had their education2 interrupted due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis. The goal of Accelerated Education Programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity.

[1] Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) replaces Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and other terminology as the standard descriptive term because, in many crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, programmes are limited in their ability to truly carry out Accelerated Learning practices. However, throughout this Guide, we reference a number of programmes that meet our definition of AEP which are called by different names, such as ALP. When this occurs, we maintain the programme's original name or designation.

[2] Basic education comprises the first eight years of formal schooling (primary and lower secondary education) up to Grade 9 (UNESCO, 2011).

As noted in the definition, AEPs emphasise acceleration of a curriculum such that students get an equivalent level of education in a shortened time frame. This requires increased and more effective time on task, emphasis on literacy and numeracy with a socio-emotional learning component and, oftentimes, removal of non-core subjects. Programmes are flexible to meet the unique needs of the learners they aim to serve. AEPs may also incorporate aspects of Accelerated Learning (see Box 1).

Box 1: Accelerated Education and Accelerated Learning

The AEWG differentiates between *Accelerated Education and Accelerated Learning* (AL). AEPs *may* incorporate aspects of AL, defined as "approaches to teaching and learning, informed by research in the cognitive and neuro-sciences, that provide more engaged, proficient and faster development of learned knowledge and basic skills". In fact, incorporating such teaching practices can lead to learners' rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills, furthering the goals of the AEP. However, we note that in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, it is often difficult to truly carry out the pedagogical and teaching practices characteristic of AL.

For further information on AL, see Charlick (2004).

AEPs in developing countries can take various forms, depending on what learners need. An AEP may be a short-term, transitional response to an emergency situation. For example, in northern Mali, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded AE programme (Education Recovery Support Activity [ERSA]) has been designed as a two-year response[3] for children whose education has been disrupted by conflict in the region. The aim is for AE centres that are established to close after two years, as they are not designed to exist in parallel with functioning formal education once security has been restored.

Alternatively, an AEP could be a longer-term, foundational programme designed to work in tandem with the formal education system. An example of this is the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Primary Schools, which have been running for over 30 years and which aim to increase access to quality primary school for 8-10 year olds. The duration of an AEP is highly dependent on the context within which it is operating but, ideally, a programme will exist as long as it is needed to meet its objectives.[4]

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[3] The programme covers Grades 1-3 in the first year (Level 1), and Grades 4-5 in the second Level 2). See USAID (2016).

[4] For a more in-depth discussion on AEP duration, see National Opinion Research Center, NORC (2016).

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Purpose of the Guide

A large number of donor agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments have set up AEPs to meet the needs of over-age, out-of-school children and youth. These programmes vary widely and are of differing quality and effectiveness. While there is guidance on quality education and education in emergencies generally, prior to this Guide, no AEP-specific Principles have existed to support these stakeholders in designing, implementing and evaluating their AEPs.

With the goal of strengthening the quality of Accelerated Education (AE) programming through a more harmonised, standardised approach, the Accelerated Education Working Group, led by UNHCR and with representation from nine member organisations,[5] has

[5] The AEWG, led by UNHCR, is made up of the following education partners working in Accelerated Education: UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, the Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Plan International, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children and War Child Holland.

identified a set of 10 evidence-based Accelerated Education Principles. The Principles elaborated in this Guide help establish clear, common aspirations for AEPs globally.

Key Programme Definitions[6]

The following key definitions outline various types of programming that may be implemented for disadvantaged, out-of-school children and youth. It is essential for programmes to note the different goals and targets of such programme types in order to select the appropriate intervention for a given context. Figure 1 offers a concise decision tree for use by organisations that are considering implementing an AEP.

Table 1: Key AE Definitions

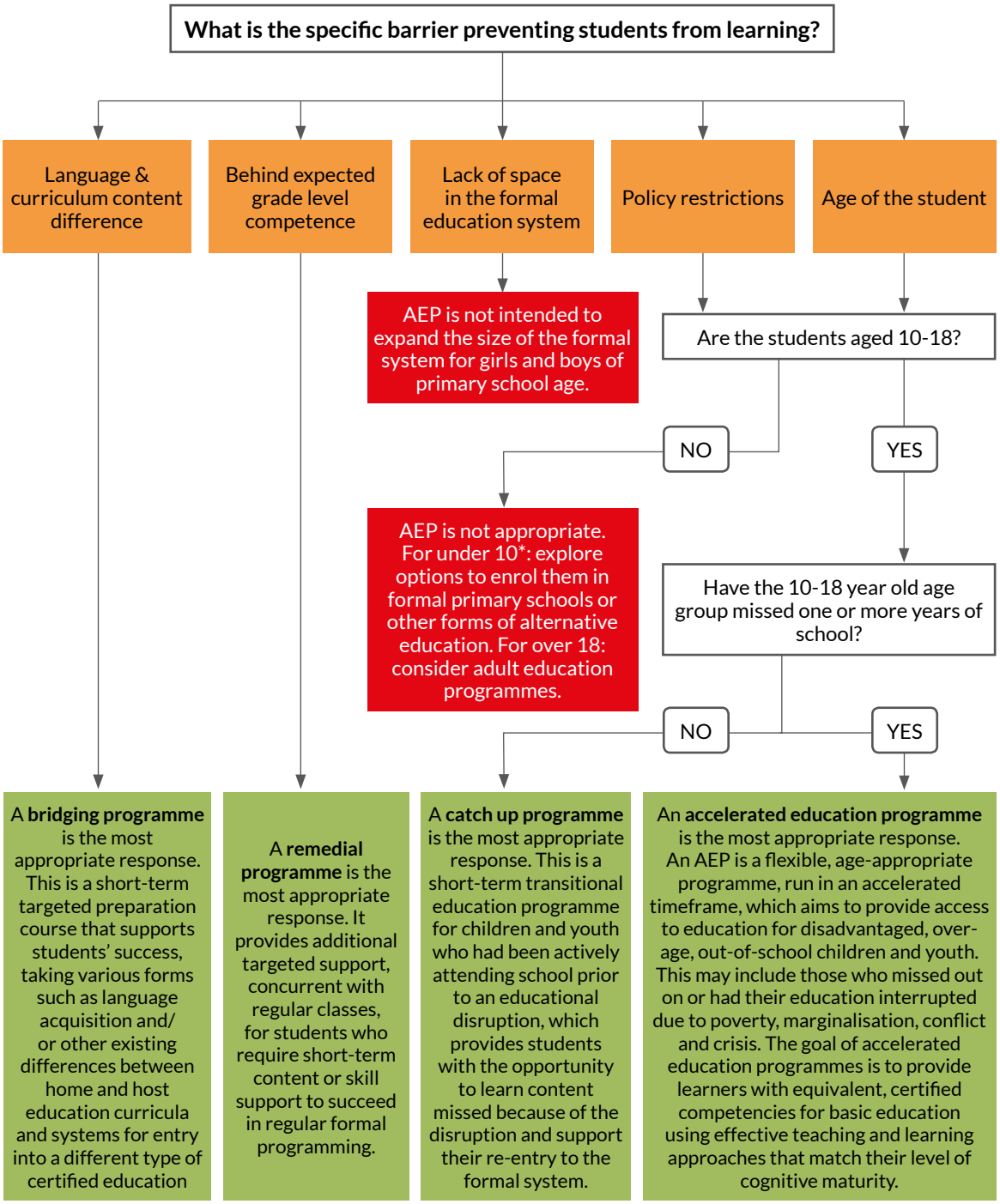
Term	Definition
Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) (Replaces Accelerated Learning Programme [ALP] and other terminology as the standard descriptive term)	A flexible, age-appropriate programme, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aims to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth. This may include those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted, due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis. The goal of Accelerated Education Programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity.
Accelerated Learning	Approaches to teaching and learning, informed by research in the cognitive and neuro-sciences, that provide more engaged, proficient and faster development of learned knowledge and basic skills.[7]
Catch-up programme	A short-term transitional education programme for children and youth who had been actively attending school prior to an educational disruption, which provides students with the opportunity to learn content missed because of the disruption and supports their re-entry to the formal system.
Bridging programme	A short-term targeted preparation course that supports students' success taking various forms such as language acquisition and/or other existing differences between home and host education curricula and systems for entry into a different type of certified education.
Remedial programme	Additional targeted support, concurrent with regular classes, for students who require short-term content or skill support to succeed in regular formal programming.

[6] All definitions appear in the INEE term bank.

[7] Although Accelerated Learning is a desirable goal for Accelerated Education Programmes, in reality most AEP teachers in humanitarian and development contexts use standard teaching-learning methods due to limited specific Accelerated Learning training and experience. Accelerated Education Programmes are able to accelerate learning by condensing the curriculum, concentrating on basic skills and competencies, having smaller classes and allowing more time on learning tasks.

Figure 1: Accelerated Education Programme Decision Tree

When is Accelerated Education a relevant response?



Accelerated Education Principles

The Principles, accompanying Action Points and guidance here within are based on a review of good practices and learning from AEPs worldwide, particularly those in conflict-affected and emergency settings. The Principles clarify the essential components of effective AEPs. Under each Principle are Action Points. Many of these are feasible, concrete steps to inform the actions of different stakeholders, but are not fully exhaustive of the steps required to meet the ambitions of the specified Principle.

How the Principles were developed

The AE Principles are the result of an iterative development process. Save the Children (SC) identified an original set of 20 AE Principles through a review of AE literature and an evaluation of a Department for International Development (DfID) funded AEP programme in South Sudan. AEWG engaged the services of the Enabling Education Network to provide a review of existing donor agency, national, and NGO policy and guidance on AEPs, and to produce a draft AE Principles Guide. AEWG reviewed the draft Principles in February 2016 and made significant modifications, reducing and re-ordering the Principles. The revised draft was sent out for an expert review in September. Finally, the AEWG field tested the Principles (and accompanying Guide) by requesting feedback from nine expert reviewers and conducting four case studies between September 2016 and January 2017. The AEWG further refined the Principles based on the field work by re-ordering and re-categorising them, elaborating upon the introductory text, developing further supporting documentation and finalising them in October 2017.

These Principles were written primarily for AEPs supporting basic education, in line with the definition of AEPs put forth by the AEWG. Many of the same Principles have equal importance and relevance for similar programmes at the secondary level.

This document contains the 10 AE Principles and accompanying Action Points which have been agreed upon by the AEWG.

How to use the Principles

The AEWG believes that, *if* the Principles are considered and applied, *then* AEPs will support learners to attain recognised qualifications in basic education. This will *then* enable learners to transition into formal education, other education or vocational training, or employment.

The AE Principles are primarily intended to support **programme designers, implementers and evaluators, as well as agencies**. These stakeholders can use the Guide to design, develop, review and evaluate individual programmes with the aim of ensuring programmes are flexible, inclusive and well-integrated with the education contexts in which they operate. They can also use the Principles to ensure that good quality, well-resourced AEPs are being promoted in all settings, and to advocate for inclusion of AEPs in the strategies, policies and budget lines of key government partners.

Governments, donors, and policymakers may also find the Principles useful, and the AEWG is developing further guidance for these stakeholders in the coming months.

For all users of the Principles, sharing, discussing and promoting the Principles and this Guide will be a useful first step.

Important considerations

The AEWG highlights the following considerations for using the Principles:

The Principles are aspirational. The Principles are not designed to be treated as minimum standards of practice. Rather, they are aspirational goals which AEPs should strive towards. This is because the complexities and challenges of working in the environments where AEPs operate often means that they may not, or cannot, meet these Principles concurrently.

The Action Points under each Principle are suggested key actions to guide AEPs in setting these strategic priorities. Many are feasible, concrete steps to inform the action of different stakeholders, but are not intended to cover all the necessary steps that may be required to meet the ambition of the specified Principle. While the long-term goal should be that AEPs meet all of these Principles, it will not happen immediately and will require the involvement and coordination of different actors.

The Principles (and Action Points) must be contextualised. The Principles were designed to be applicable across the range of settings in which AEPs currently operate – from education in emergencies to post-conflict/recovery contexts. That said, it is recognised that the Principles and Action Points must be adapted to suit the operating environment, and take into account the programmatic and institutional constraints that create both opportunities and challenges when prioritising action. For example, in some emergency contexts it may be difficult to train teachers or develop an AE curriculum as quickly as is needed for an appropriate response. However, in other emergency contexts, an AE curriculum or body of trained teachers may already be available and upon which the AEP can draw. For this reason, users of this Guide should consider *all* of the Principles, along with opportunities and limitations of the context, and set key strategic priorities for the short, medium and long term in relation to these Principles. For example, in some contexts, having alternative hours of operation may not be possible because of safety concerns or because of Ministry of Education (MoE) regulations that require AEP classes to be held at the same time as the formal schools.[8]

A number of inherent tensions exist amongst the various Principles. Field testing revealed that there are clear tensions amongst the various Principles. For example, in some contexts, the broader institutional environment is unsupportive of flexible approaches to teaching and learning. In such contexts, aligning programmes with the national education system may reduce the flexibility required by the learners. Programme designers and implementers should make strategic decisions with the interests of learners in mind.

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[8] Please note that when we use the acronym, *MoE*, we are referring to the Ministry of Education *or the relevant education authority* in a given context. The AEWG recognises that the name of such an education authority may differ between contexts.

Design, monitoring and evaluation

The AE Principles can be used for design, monitoring and evaluation of effective AEPs. Users of the Principles can track their progress towards achieving the Principles, along with collecting data on programme outcomes. In the short to mid-term, integrating the Principles into such a framework can help programmes track their progress towards each of the Principles and identify areas in need of improvement. In the mid- to long-term, using the Principles as part of a monitoring and evaluation framework can help users understand the effects of applying the Principles on their programme outcomes. See for some examples of domains in which AEPs can collect information about their programme and its outcomes.

Table 2: Example domains for data collection

Principles-focused Process Domains	Short- to Mid-term Outcomes Domains	Mid- to Long-term Outcomes Domains
a. Identification and enrolment of target students b. Ability to be flexible to meet the needs of diverse learners c. Development of AE-suitable curricula, timetabling, etc. d. Collaboration with Teacher Training Institutes, Ministry of Education, institutes of curriculum development e. Engagement of community, including target learners, in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	a. Improved attendance and retention b. Improved learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy c. Enhanced psychosocial skills, socio-emotional well-being	a. Achievement of recognised qualifications and certifications b. Transition to formal, vocational or other education c. Employment

For an example of how programmes can use the AE Principles, see Box 2.

Box 2. Save the Children AEP Pujehun, Sierra Leone: Using the Principles for design, monitoring and evaluation

Save the Children, Sierra Leone is actively piloting the Principles, working towards adherence to them as applicable in their context, capturing data on their alignment to the Principles, and reflecting on the application of and impact of using the Principles in their AEP in Pujehun. Some ways in which they use the Principles include:

Design Workshop. During the first year of the grant, SC held a three-day workshop with a variety of stakeholders from the community and MoE officials to design the programme based on the AE Principles. In preparation for the workshop, they considered which stakeholders could speak to which Principles. During the workshop, they facilitated a number of activities to more deeply understand how the Principles

would be applied in their context and what next steps needed to occur to move towards implementation. The design workshop was participatory in nature, and SC facilitated a number of activities to encourage equal participation by all stakeholders, including body maps, child timelines, human Likert scales, and plenary and focus group discussions. Following the workshop, they reflected on the success of the workshop and what follow-up information was needed.

Assessment against Principles. In addition to implementing the AEP they have designed, they are also pilot testing the Principles by assessing their programme against the Principles with the aim of linking their outcomes at the end of the three-year pilot to the application of the Principles. At the end of Year 1, in collaboration with community stakeholders, SC designed and carried out a thorough baseline assessment to measure their current alignment with the Principles, identify any challenges, and make plans for rectifying challenges. They will do a mid-line assessment at the end of Year 2 and an end-line assessment at the end of Year 3.

Project Implementation Plan. SC has continued using the Principles as a guide throughout intital implementation. They used guidance from the Principles in developing the curriculum, hiring teachers, and forming the AEP committee. Their implementation plan is largely guided by the Principles.

Source: Boisvert (2017b)

Additionally, programmes should incorporate aspects of Adaptive Management, or the gathering of data and feedback for the purpose of developing and adapting the AEP, into their design, monitoring and evaluation processes.[9] Programmes working in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts face a number of challenges in developing a programme, including uncertainty and lack of agreement about how to best meet the needs of learners, as well as volatility and changing dynamics. By constantly collecting data and feedback and incorporating that into the AEP design, programmes can be responsive to and better meet the needs of learners.

[9] For further information on Adaptive Management and related concepts, see USAID's Learning Lab, MERLIN, and Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN). Also see related work by DME for Peace and ODI.

How is the Guide organised?

The Guide is organised according to the AE Principles. These are:

LEARNERS

Principle 1: AEP is flexible and for over-age learners

Principle 2: Curriculum, materials and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated, AE-suitable and use relevant language of instruction

Principle 3: AE learning environment is inclusive, safe and learning-ready

TEACHERS

Principle 4: Teachers are recruited, supervised and remunerated

Principle 5: Teachers participate in continuous professional development

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Principle 6: Goals, monitoring and funding align

Principle 7: AE centre is effectively managed

Principle 8: Community is engaged and accountable

ALIGNMENT WITH MOE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Principle 9: AEP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education

Principle 10: AEP is aligned with the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture

Each section contains the Principle and key Action Points, key definitions, essential information, examples and case studies, and indications of challenges and other points to consider.

 Definition

 Experiences and examples

 Essential to know

 Challenges and considerations

 Key points and actions

PRINCIPLE 1

AEP is flexible and for over-age learners

a. **Target over-age, out-of-school learners. AEPs are typically for children and youth aged approximately 10–18.**

b. **In collaboration with the MoE or relevant education authority, define, communicate and regulate the age range for student enrolment in AEP.**

c. **Make AEP class time and location flexible as required by the community, teacher, and above all, the specific needs of both male and female learners in order to ensure consistent attendance and completion.**

d. **Provide age-appropriate, introductory-level course for learners who have never been to school to improve readiness skills.**

AEPs provide flexible opportunities for studying a condensed curriculum that enables transition into mainstream, formal schooling, or provides recognised and relevant certification and skills for the labour market.

AEPs are both a **supply and demand side response** to the needs of out-of-school children and youth. As a supply-side response, AEPs are used in times when children and young people have had their education interrupted by conflict and/or crisis. They have also been used when schools have been shut down, or where the school system is unable to reach all learners. As a demand-side response, the flexibility of AEPs can overcome factors which might preclude children who are forced to work, are over-age, are young mothers, or who face other forms of exclusion from entering into or remaining in the formal education system.

In some countries with very large out-of-school populations, AEPs have formed a significant component of alternative or second-chance education opportunities. They have also played a long-term role in education system strategies.

AEPs are typically **aimed at children and young adults aged 10 to 18 years**. These children and young people may want to access education but are unable or unwilling to enter formal schooling with younger children. AEPs, which aim to support students to complete basic education, are designed to meet this group's needs. Ideally, children younger than 10 should be part of the formal education system at the appropriate grade for their age, or participate in shorter-term bridging or catch-up programmes[10] and re-enter formal education at intermediary stages. Youth and adults over 18 should have opportunities to learn through adult learning services.

Previous research suggests that children younger than 10 are not well suited to AEPs because they are unable to cope developmentally with the accelerated rate of learning in terms of both content and compression (e.g., Baxter & Bethke, 2009).[11]

AEPs should consider the needs of learners and the community, regulations of the MoE or relevant education authority, and other contextual factors to determine the age range of a programme. Some programmes may target the entire age range of 10 to 18, while others may focus on a smaller range of ages within this group. For example, there may be concerns in some settings of having children aged 10 to 13 together with children 14 and over, and the desired programme outcomes for each of these sub-groups may vary (e.g., reintegration into formal schooling versus employment).

[10] See Table 1 for further information on the different types of relevant programmes.

[11] In some cases, AEPs have targeted children as young as 8 and youth up to age 35. For example, in Dadaab settlement in northeast Kenya, where many students miss out on the opportunity for a secondary education because there are only seven secondary schools (compared to 35 primary schools), RET International operates a secondary AEP for youth aged 16 to 35. While different from this guidance, such programmes are adapting the Principles to their context.

Box 3. Barriers to over-age children entering formal education

There are many barriers that prevent over-age children from entering formal, basic education. In some countries, children over a certain age are legally prohibited from attending school. For example, in Jordan, learners more than three years older than the average age of children in their grade cannot enrol in school. In other cases, older children may not want to attend school with younger children. They become bored with the content, and the teaching methodology is inappropriate for their developmental stage. These students need an age-appropriate environment where they can gain primary knowledge and skills. Similarly, parents of younger children may not want their children attending class with older learners. They may fear for the safety of their child, and they may have concerns about having inappropriate role models. This is particularly true if younger girls have to attend with older boys and young men.

When over-age children do attend formal schooling, there can be negative effects. Having a wide range of cognitive maturity can create a difficult teaching and learning environment. Additionally, it can be psychologically damaging for older children to be placed in class with children who are significantly younger. On a policy level, having over-age children in basic education creates a challenge, too. When many over-age children attend the early grades, it appears that there are more students of the age-appropriate group (i.e., 6-11 year olds in primary school) in school than is actually this case. This is particularly true in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, where it is more difficult to determine the number of age-appropriate students who should be in school. Having inaccuracies in the number of age-appropriate children in schools further complicates financing and planning for formal education, and can give the illusion that the enrolment of young children is higher than it actually is.

AEPs can address these challenges by allowing over-age students to access the primary curriculum in a condensed format that minimises repetition and eliminates less-relevant content, by providing an engaging, age-appropriate pedagogy, and by allowing students to interact with similar-aged peers.

Adapted from: Baxter & Bethke (2009)

Flexibility in timing and location is necessary to meet the specific and often diverse needs of AEP learners who were unable to complete a formal school education.

Flexible timetabling is important for AEPs seeking to reach over-age children, who often have to earn money or work for their families. Flexible timetables can mean having different daily school hours than the formal school, like starting late in the morning after early chores or work, or running classes in the evening after work. It can also mean having no school on market day or during harvest time, or adjusting the duration and frequency of the class day.

Flexibility can also mean holding classes in **non-traditional locations**. While some AEPs may hold classes in the formal school after regular school hours, others may use a

community space such as an unused building, mosque, or pasture; and yet others build or restore a structure for the purpose of housing the AEP. The key is to negotiate timetables and locations with learners and their communities, considering the needs of both male and female students and teachers.

Flexibility can be hampered by local structures which can impose traditional education practices or limit the ability to be responsive to learners' needs. AEPs sometimes mimic formal school programmes which are not sufficiently flexible for learners who have been unable to go to school.

For example, education officials may require AEPs to meet in regular schools in the afternoon. This may be challenging for some students, including those who also attend religious education. In especially dedicated AEP classrooms, programmes may have to conform with MoE schedules. For example, in South Sudan, AEPs were required to hold to the regular school calendar (Nicholson, 2006a). This can effectively create a split shift system, albeit one that moves through the curriculum twice as fast.

In some contexts, two different models of AEPs may be observed – one led by the MoE, and one led by NGOs, community-based organisations (CBO), faith-based organisations and communities. The MoE-led programmes – while having increased legitimacy, alignment with national policies, resources, standardisation, oversight, certification and clear pathways for reintegration – may struggle with the ability to be flexible. In contrast, programmes implemented by a diverse group of organisations but who work outside of the MoE are flexible enough to implement the programme according to the particular needs of the community, the context and, most importantly, the learner. However, these programmes may lack legitimacy, standards, oversight and resources, and may not result in recognised certification.

Additionally, challenges with flexibility can occur with very large programmes. Generally speaking, the smaller the programme, the more flexible timetabling has tended to be, such as the War Child Holland and Children in Crisis programmes (NORC, 2016). A notable difference is large, community-based AEPs, which may also be able to incorporate the needed flexibility.

For learners who have never attended school or who have been out of school for extended periods of time, AEPs may need to offer age-appropriate introductory or bridging courses to prepare learners to begin the AEP.

Linked to the first stage of pre-learning in Accelerated Learning theory, the intent is to prepare children's bodies and minds to be open to take in new concepts or skills, or take in new knowledge (Charlick, 2004). This may include providing targeted psychosocial support for traumatised populations, broader social-emotional skills such as resilience and empathy, or critical pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, including preparing children to learn in a different language of instruction. These courses could be held before the AEP begins, concurrent to the AEP, or be a part of the AEP if there is a great need.

PRINCIPLE 2

Curriculum, materials and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated, AE-suitable and use relevant language of instruction

a. **Develop and provide condensed, levelled, age-appropriate, competency-based curriculum.**

b. **Prioritise the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills as the foundation for learning.**

c. **Integrate Accelerated Learning principles, pedagogy and practices throughout the curriculum and teacher training.**

d. **Adapt the AEP curriculum, learning materials, language of instruction and teaching methods to suit over-age children and reflect gender-sensitive and inclusive education practices.**

e. **Integrate psychosocial well-being and life skills' acquisition in the curriculum to address young people's experiences in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.**

f. **Ensure AEP timetable allows for adequate time to cover curriculum.**

g. **Develop and provide teacher guides.**

h. **When funding AE curriculum development, allow sufficient time (1-2 years) and budget, and provide long-term technical expertise.**

To meet the needs of learners, AEP curricula, materials and pedagogy often differ from those of formal schools. AEP curricula are condensed, often removing non-core subjects and repetition while focusing on literacy and mathematics. The curriculum may incorporate critical life skills, such as employment training, safety information, and socio-emotional learning components. In addition to compressing the curriculum, AEPs ideally use Accelerated Learning approaches to facilitate deeper, more effective acquisition of knowledge and skills. Accelerated Learning curricula, pedagogy and practices should be responsive to, and inclusive of, all students, including girls, religious and ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities (see Principle 3).

Condensing Curricula

Ideally, AEPs in emergency and developing country contexts facilitate student learning by **compressing or condensing curricula**, while using Accelerated Learning pedagogy. This condensing is a responsibility ideally assumed by the MoE but, in reality, it is often done by implementing agencies, in close consultation with education authorities.

In order to condense the curricula, AEPs remove overlaps and repetition of content while ensuring that subject matter is mutually reinforcing.

Condensing curricula can be achieved by compressing all primary subjects, or by using a partial curriculum that removes non-core subjects such as art, sport and music. AEPs tend to focus on building core competencies in basic literacy and numeracy skills, usually using the local language or mother tongue as the language of instruction. See Table 2 for examples of ways programmes may condense the curriculum.

Table 2. Examples of condensed timetables[12]

	MoE Grades	AEP Levels	Rate of condensing	Re-entry Point
Example 1	Grades 1 & 2	Level 1	2 : 1	7th grade
	Grades 3 & 4	Level 2		
	Grades 3 & 4	Level 3		
Example 2	Grades 1 – 4	Levels 1 – 3	1.3 : 1	5th grade
Example 3	Grades 1 – 3	Level 1	3 : 1	10th grade
	Grades 4 – 6	Level 2		
	Grades 7 – 9	Level 3		

[12] While the AEWG defines AEPs as being for children aged 10 to 18 to attain the equivalent of basic education, other programmes exist that condense the secondary curriculum in a similar way.

AEPs can take various forms, from short-term programmes that help learners cover just a few years to offering full cycles of primary schooling.[13] AEPs must ensure that the timetable they develop allows adequate time for covering the curriculum, whether it be full, partial or modified. When curricula are condensed, learners need to be even more intensively supported by teachers, as topics are covered rapidly.

AEP curricula, which are based on essential elements of the national curriculum, help learners transition into mainstream, formal schooling, technical and vocational training, or employment. If AEP curricula do not already exist, agencies delivering AEPs can advocate for, and support, their development through review or design assistance. Working with national curriculum and child development experts will ensure the AEP curriculum covers essential content and is tailored to learners' needs.

AEPs should be sure to allow for sufficient time, resources, and expertise for development of curricula, should none already exist. This may take one to two years, and may evolve by starting with the lower levels first, then moving to higher levels.

Box 4. How accelerated?

AEP rates of acceleration have ranged from covering 1.25 years of the primary curriculum in one year (such as in BRAC Primary Schools [BPS]) to covering three years of the curriculum in one year (as in School for Life in Ghana). Most commonly, AEPs cover two grades of the primary curriculum in one AEP year.

The first three grades of primary school are often covered faster than the last three, since learners will be able to learn lower-level skills more quickly. However, acceleration rates need to be decided based on what will be challenging and appropriate for learners. The rate may be much slower where a particular primary year needs more work. For example, in Malawi, students transition to learning English in Grade 5, so covering the Grade 5 curriculum may require more time.

Adapted from: Longden (2013)

Language can be a major barrier for learners who have been out of school with little exposure to the language of formal education, as well as for those displaced from their original communities. Initial assessment should identify learners' first languages and cultural backgrounds.

[13] There are also a number of different programmes that facilitate learners to get back on track, such as bridging and catch-up programmes. However, these programmes are fundamentally different from AEPs. See Key Programme Definitions for clarification on the difference between AEPs and other such programmes.

AEPs should set up appropriate language of instruction and curriculum content to help learners understand lessons easily and learn any other languages they need. In some contexts, there may be a variety of mother tongues. In this case, AEPs may need to identify a neutral mother tongue as a language of instruction.

If the language of formal schooling is different from the language used by learners at home, AEPs will need to teach in the home language while building up skills in the formal school language. More of the formal school language can be added gradually to each lesson, after learners have practised concepts and skills in their first language. This approach, known as mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE), is being adopted by governments in a range of crisis-affected settings, such as South Sudan where teachers instruct in the mother tongue until during Primary 1 through 3, then switch to English in Primary 4 (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, Republic of South Sudan, July 2015). MTBMLE can also be useful for AEPs.

Life skills and livelihood activities can be added to curricula to make education relevant and engaging for learners. However, programmes need to ensure that curricula do not become overburdened, hampering acceleration and creating unwieldy schemes of work. Integrating features from learners' lives into lesson plans and materials makes issues of community health, water, sanitation and livelihoods part of language and mathematics teaching.

Curricula may also aim to improve learners' **psychosocial well-being**, addressing the unique needs of learners in fragile contexts. Such curricula may incorporate **socio-emotional learning**, conflict resolution and livelihood preparation. Ideally, these aspects of the curricula would be integrated throughout all core content areas, rather than as a standalone subject. Additionally, it is ideal if teachers are allocated to remain with learners through multiple AEP levels to sustain learning and psychosocial support.

Box 5. Save the Children Pujehun, Sierra Leone: Focus on literacy and maths

In Save the Children's AEP in Pujehun, Sierra Leone, the curriculum is parsed down to primarily include core subjects – literacy, maths, social studies, and science. Learners spend more than twice as much time on literacy and maths than social studies and science per week.

Subject	Minutes/Session	Sessions/Week	Time/Week
Literacy	45	5	3 hrs 45 mins
Math	45	5	3 hrs 45 mins
Social Studies	45	2	1 hr 30 mins
Science	45	2	1 hr 30 mins

Additionally, the curriculum incorporates some important health and life skills content.

Adapted from: Boisvert (2017b)

Accelerated Learning Pedagogy and Practices

Accelerated Learning pedagogy can be an important component of AEPs. Accelerated Learning is not only about learning faster or omitting subject matter (although this is one aspect of accelerated curricula). It is about how learners learn best, using a variety of methodologies that enable them to learn more effectively and at an accelerated pace (Baxter & Bethke, 2009).

Accelerated Learning pedagogy is learner-centred, active, participatory and varied to meet the needs of all. Teaching is age-appropriate and aims to support different learning styles. Knowledge of child development, such as what types of cognitive tasks are appropriate for children of which ages, is particularly important, since AEP learners are over-age for the level at which they are studying and can often learn faster than younger children.

Older learners learn well through peer-to-peer approaches where they can learn from each other. This social interaction is also important for them to strengthen their social support networks.

Teachers who use Accelerated Learning teaching approaches avoid lecture-style teaching. Instead they guide and facilitate learners to find out for themselves, while having a firm grasp of what learners are expected to discover.

Accelerated Learning approaches emphasise the influence that self-belief and motivation have on learning. They recognise that students have different learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic, and they harness different types of intelligence and the ways in which information is retained and recalled. **Ideally, Accelerated Learning does not simply fast-track learners or facilitate learners to catch up.** Instead, Accelerated Learning approaches begin with the individual needs of learners, motivating and actively engaging them to learn as efficiently as possible through learner-centred, fun and interesting activities.

> *"It is accelerated because it allows learners to fulfil their potential and reach a level of achievement that may seem beyond them."*
>
> (Nicholson, 2006a, p. 6)

When programmes use Accelerated Learning pedagogy, students' learning is deeper, faster and more efficient (Charlick, 2004). Students better understand their own learning preferences, develop life-long skills and learn how to learn (see Box 6 for an example).

Box 6. Colombia's Ethno-High School AEP: Accelerated Learning pedagogy in action

As part of the government of Colombia's support for flexible education models for out-of-school children and youth, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) previously assisted it in the establishment of AEPs at the secondary level. These programmes, known as High Schools for Peace, or Ethno-High Schools, supported internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community youth (13 to 25 years old) to acquire a high school diploma and improve their skills towards promoting peaceful co-existence in their communities. The learning process in both the Ethno-High Schools and the High Schools for Peace was guided by strong inquiry-based practice, and focused on topics and concerns that were of interest to students. Additionally, a strong focus of the curriculum was on project-based learning, where students apply learning to addressing actual community concerns – such as security, recruitment of youth into paramilitary groups, and coca harvesting.

Data provided by NRC Colombia suggest that, based on the experiences and perceptions of learners, such an approach was highly relevant, pertinent, and useful. Students interviewed felt that the Ethno-High Schools allowed them to learn about their ethnicity, culture and ways of contributing to their community. Students expressed high levels of agreement that this educational experience also enabled them to better resolve conflicts peacefully, understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and play a constructive role in family and community decisions. Learning outcome data from the programme also demonstrated that students going through these schools performed equivalently to their peers in mainstream schools.

Adapted from: Shah (2015)

The contextual constraints inherent in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, such as the lack of resources and limited time to train and supervise teachers, can make implementing Accelerated Learning approaches difficult. Additionally, formally trained teachers may be resistant to using such learner-centred approaches, as these are different from what they are used to.

National curricula, texts and assessment requirements may also impede an AEP's ability to implement Accelerated Learning approaches, particularly when alignment to the formal system is a prerequisite for learning in AEPs to be recognised and accredited.

Condensing curricula by removing non-core subjects, which is an important characteristic of AEPs so that over-age learners can attain a basic education in a faster timeframe, often contradicts Accelerated Learning approaches which emphasise learning through different styles. For example, a partial curriculum which removes art, sport and music may reduce opportunities for learners to use visual and kinaesthetic learning styles.

While many AEPs are unable to implement Accelerated Learning pedagogy and practices, they should strive to incorporate them into their programme.

Teaching and Learning Materials

AEP learning materials are designed to help learners consolidate knowledge and skills. Materials should be inclusive, gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive, and they should be directly related to the curriculum being taught. They should eliminate negative stereotypes and address social justice, or respond to other issues relevant to the context.

Textbooks may need to be developed in more than one language. This may include learners' first language or mother tongue, so that students can learn to read easily with understanding. This may also include the main language of formal school or business, so learners can more easily transition to formal education or employment.

In addition to textbooks, AEP learners will need plenty of **additional learning materials** – such as readers, activity or exercise books and exam books – especially for building literacy. These, too, need to be inclusive, gender- and conflict-sensitive, directly related to the curriculum, and developed in multiple languages.

Learning materials should be tailored to the age of students. They should use developmentally appropriate language, examples, stories and cognitive tasks. Materials should also be gender-sensitive, and should demonstrate representation by diverse groups of learners, including children of religious and ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities.

To ensure that learners have the materials they need to succeed, it can be helpful to organise community book banks for lending reading and learning materials, supervised by volunteers. Alternately, it may be better to give each learner a package of reading materials.

Reading materials will need to be replaced every few years due to wear and tear, even if they are in a library or book bank. The cost of replacement needs to be budgeted for, unless there is already a government budget for AEP learning materials.

Box 7. NRC Accelerated Learning Program, Burundi: Curriculum focus

The Accelerated Learning Programme Burundi curriculum focused on the core subjects of Kirundi and mathematics and also offered physical education, health education, nutrition, environmental education, culture, civics and ethics. French was introduced towards the end of the one-year course. Learners were expected to complete two years of learning in 10 months. ALP materials, which were provided for free in ALP centres, included a kit or box of teaching and learning materials for one year, a teacher's guide, one exercise book per child, a cloth alphabet and a figures chart, and some small wooden cubes. Language textbooks were available in the mother tongue at a rate of just under one book for two children.

Source: Obura (2008)

AEP educators will also need high quality, detailed teaching and content guides, including detailed model lesson plans. These must relate clearly to the AEP curriculum and take educators through specific steps in delivering the curriculum using Accelerated Learning pedagogy. Guides will be most efficient within the tight timeframes of AEP if they are in languages that teachers can read easily.

Box 8. Elements of a foundational "Opportunity to Learn"

The usefulness of curricula, pedagogy and practices depends, perhaps most importantly, on the amount of time learners spend on task, or the foundational "Opportunity to Learn." While not specific to AEPs, substantial research has shown that there are eight elements which impact a student's opportunity to learn. If those elements are not present in a programme, the ability of the programme to help learners succeed will be limited. For AEPs, this will be true even if the programme puts substantial effort into developing condensed curricula, fostering Accelerated Learning pedagogy and practices, and adhering to the other AE Principles.

A basic opportunity to learn can be achieved with the following elements.

Foundational elements: Inputs and management

1. The school year has a minimal instructional time of 850-1,000 hours per year.
2. The school is open every hour and every day of the school year, and the school is located in the village or at least within 1 km of the student.
3. The teacher is present every day of the school year and every hour of the school day.
4. The student is present every day of the school year and every hour of the school day.
5. The student–teacher ratio is within manageable limits, assumed to be at least below 40:1.
6. Instructional materials are available for all students and used daily.

Foundational elements: Pedagogy

7. The school day and classroom activities are organised to maximise time-on-task – the effective use of time for educational purposes.
8. Emphasis is placed on students developing core reading skills by the second or third grade.

Adapted from: Gillies & Quijada (2008)

PRINCIPLE 3

AE learning environment is inclusive, safe and learning-ready

a. **AEP classes are free, and there are no fees for uniforms or materials.**

b. **Apply (inter)national standards or guidelines to ensure relevant specifications for safety and quality for the learning environment are met.**

c. **Ensure access to water and separate latrines for girls and boys, and provision of sanitary materials when relevant.**

d. **Budget for maintenance and upkeep of facilities.**

e. **Resource AEPs with a safe shelter, classroom furniture and teaching and learning supplies and equipment.**

f. **Provide information to students and teachers on reporting mechanisms and follow-up of exposure to violence and gender-based violence.**

g. **Follow recommended relevant education authority guidelines for teacher–pupil ratio, but not greater than 40 pupils per teacher.**

Learning readiness, inclusiveness and safety of AEPs is associated with learners' ability to enrol, attend and succeed in AEPs.

Box 9. Learning Readiness

"Learning-ready" means that the AEP reduces or eliminates costs associated with attendance, ensures the provision and maintenance of facilities, is effectively managed, and maintains an appropriate pupil–teacher ratio.

Reviews of AEPs (e.g., NORC, 2016; IBIS, 2012) have found that **dropout and poor attendance** are common when predictable challenges – such as finding money to pay for hidden costs of attendance – have not been planned for.

School-related costs borne by learners and their parents (including for transport, learning materials, and uniforms) need to be minimal, and removed whenever possible. AEPs can do this through negotiating access to existing MoE or programme budget lines for supporting vulnerable learners; deciding in advance which items the programme itself will budget for; and encouraging communities to mobilise resources.

Poor **centre management** – including lack of appropriate, gender-separated latrines (which particularly affects adolescent girls), lack of school breakfast and/or energy boosting snacks, and teachers' absenteeism – can contribute to poor attendance and dropout.

The centre management committee, or other guiding body, should decide how to **manage competing demands on learners' time**, which may reduce attendance. Questions to consider include: Should class times be changed in consultation with the community? Is advocacy needed to reduce learners' family or work duties, particularly for girls? Are learners at risk of recruitment into armed groups? Working closely with learners and the community (see Principle 8) will allow these issues to be addressed.

To ensure all students succeed, AEPs should follow agreed-upon guidelines for education quality, such as the INEE Minimum Standards. This includes making sure that there are sufficient teaching and learning supplies and classroom facilities and furniture. Be sure to budget for upkeep and maintenance. Also, follow guidelines for appropriate pupil–teacher ratio, but not to exceed 40 students per teacher. Ideally, programmes would have as few as 20 students or fewer per teacher in order to be able to implement Accelerated Learning practices and ensure students can succeed in an accelerated timeframe.

Box 10. Inclusion

"Inclusive" means that **all learners are welcomed**, take part in activities, and make progress in learning (Ainscow, 2005).

AEPs must also be inclusive to all learners. Teachers, learners and community members should identify obstacles to participating in school, giving additional attention to challenges of learners with special needs, which put them at higher risk of exclusion.

AEPs will need to pay special attention to children and young people with disabilities, girls, IDPs, ex-combatants and young mothers. Girls, for example, will need access to gender-appropriate and separate latrines, as well as sanitary materials.

To ensure inclusion of all learners, AEPs will need to be set up according to INEE Minimum Standards: Access and Learning Environment: Standard 1, "Equal Access", as well as any relevant national standards. AEPs must also facilitate inclusion through the day-to-day management of the AEP. This can include:

- Reaching out to make sure IDPs and others who have been displaced by conflict or crisis are consulted about what they need to take part in the AEP
- Guiding teachers on managing classroom space for learners with sensory impairments
- Monitoring to see whether boys and girls are participating equally
- Offering young people affected by crisis psychosocial support from teachers

Keeping an AEP centre on track as a **safe, welcoming and inclusive space** can be done by training and mentoring a community education committee (CEC)[14] (see Principle 8) to monitor exclusion and protection issues, look out for learners who are struggling and to monitor teachers. Committees can be given guidance on taking action to support learners, and on when to take issues to AEP management and local government, for example, when sexual abuse has been identified. They may be able to work with local leaders and government to advocate for an acceptable outcome.

In addition to ensuring that AEPs are learning ready and inclusive, programmes must also meet safety and child protection standards. UNHCR defines safety and protection in education for people affected by conflict or emergencies as follows (adapted from UNHCR, 2015, p. 5):

- Girls and boys have equal access to education at all levels and are treated equally in the classroom
- Exploitation and abuse do not take place at schools, and schools have effective reporting and referral mechanisms for abuse, including consequences for perpetrators of sexual- and gender-based violence and other abuses
- There is a teacher code of conduct and a mechanism to ensure it is monitored and enforced

[14] Please note that, when we use the acronym, *CEC*, we are referring to the management responsibilities and roles that community plays in the implementation of the AEP. Different terms may be used to designate similar organisations, such as parent–teacher associations (PTAs) and school management committees (SMCs).

- The community is engaged to ensure the protection and security of all students
- The distance between home and school is not too great and does not pose safety risks
- Cultural issues that interfere with educational participation are met with innovative thinking
- Any social cohesion tension is addressed by inclusive or peace education programming
- There is access to potable water and hand-washing facilities with soap
- There are sufficient numbers of gender-segregated and disability-accessible latrines
- School buildings are safe and there is school fencing

If there is malnutrition and problems with food access for targeted learners, there is a school feeding programme.

INEE Minimum Standards: Access and Learning Environment: Standards 2 ("Protection and Well-being") and 3 ("Facilities and Services") also identify key actions for ensuring that learning environments are safe and secure.

Ensuring inclusion and protection is vital for AEP learners, as they are among the most excluded. Barriers which might be overcome by learners with more economic or social resources may be insurmountable unless AEPs are fully focused on supporting those who are struggling.

When working to build inclusion and protection in AEPs, consider that **older and younger learners may be learning together**; teachers may not have had the same training in protection or inclusion that formal teachers have; and learners may feel some stigma or discrimination about not being in formal school.

If a teacher is identified as using **physical violence** or committing **sexual assault or harassment**, they should be taken out of teaching duties immediately until a review has taken place, in accordance with the code of conduct.

If a teacher is on the MoE payroll, there may be limitations around how the MoE responds to breaches of the code. This does not take away the need to address the issue. A reporting mechanism for physical, sexual, emotional and gender-based violence should be in place. All students, teachers and other staff should know how to report violence and abuse – whether perpetrated by other students or by teachers and staff.

Each AEP location can benefit from having a **student committee**, a diverse group of 8-10 learners – girls, boys, learners from displaced and host communities, and children with and without disabilities – who meet regularly and act as the voice of children and young people.

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Student committees often:

- Identify learners who need extra support to attend or participate in learning
- Raise problems with learning (teaching methods and styles, materials, etc.) which may be leading learners to drop out
- Share learners' priorities for curricula and recreational facilities
- Raise protection and safety concerns
- Highlight concerns about transition out of the AEP which may cause learners to leave early
- Monitor attendance and dropout, and follow-up with families to encourage re-enrolment

Alternatively, a learner can represent students on the CEC.

When teachers notice a student is **missing class or seems disengaged or worried in class**, they can talk to the student to learn what is going on. Questions to consider might include: Does the learner need glasses? Are they exhausted from work or walking? Do the pace and type of activities in lessons need to be changed? Could a learner's first language be used more, or could some learners translate for others?

The CEC and head teacher or AEP manager, once alerted, can **talk to the learner's family** and find a way to solve the problem. They can find out: Is there a need for psychosocial support? Is stress or trauma preventing learners from attending or concentrating? Is there a benefactor in the community who can help with food, healthcare or clothing costs?

Box 11. Working towards inclusion and the "Do No Harm" approach

When identifying a strategy for including all learners, AEPs should consider the Do No Harm approach in relation to the unintended consequences of their efforts, so they don't unintentionally do harm to those who are already marginalised.

By definition, the efforts to target the most marginalised populations, including nomadic/pastoralist communities, refugees/IDPs, girls, ethnic minorities, and former youth combatants, follow the principle of Do No Harm. For example, the Gambella programme in Ethiopia used mobile AEP centres and flexible timetables to ensure accessible classes for historically marginalised pastoralist populations. Additionally, the programme was aware of ongoing conflict between different ethnic communities and recruited teachers with the same cultural and linguistic background as their students. Learning and teaching materials were also developed in different languages. The RISE pilot programme in Iraq and the Community Based Education Centres in Kabul, Afghanistan also clearly identified potential exclusions and responded to them by obtaining buy-in via community mobilisation techniques.

However, approaches to inclusion need to be carefully considered. For example, anecdotal evidence on a catch-up programme in Burundi suggests some students dropped out of the programme because they were stigmatised as former combatants. While not explicitly an AEP, the principle remains the same – these unintended consequences have the potential to foster or exacerbate conflict, i.e., to do harm.

Source: NORC (2016)

PRINCIPLE 4

Teachers are recruited, supervised and remunerated

a. **Recruit teachers from target geographic areas, build on learners' culture, language and experience and ensure gender balance.**

b. **Ensure teachers are guided by – and, where appropriate, sign – a code of conduct.**

c. **Provide regular supervision that ensures and supports teachers' attendance and performance of job responsibilities.**

d. **Ensure teachers receive fair and consistent payment on a regular basis, in line with the relevant education authority or other implementers, and commensurate with the hours they teach.**

AEPs may recruit many different types of teachers:[15] local, untrained educators; individuals with experience in other fields, such as community development and health; retired formal school teachers; employed formal school teachers who are able to take on a second shift; teachers from host communities; and those certified nationally or in their home country.

Where possible, recruit teachers **from the local community** (the community of the learners), who are qualified to a recognised national standard.

Share the "calls for teachers" or job posting through the CEC. Select a committee to make decisions on recruitment for all teachers, and make the recruitment criteria widely available.

It is important to seek a good **balance of female and male teachers**, as well as teachers who **speak learners' first language**. If not enough female teachers can be recruited, consider female assistant teachers instead. In order to ensure that AEPs do not to reinforce gender discrimination, support female assistant teachers to achieve full teacher status through training and certification.

Before recruiting teachers, establish preferred AEP teacher qualities and skills in collaboration with partners and community members. Some questions to help identify teacher characteristics include:

- What level of education do teachers need in order to teach the condensed curriculum?
- What level of experience with teaching or working with young people would be helpful?
- What attitudes towards young people, girls, minorities, people with disabilities, etc. will be necessary?
- What languages do teachers need to speak, read and write?
- What additional skills or knowledge do teachers need to teach the life skills or practical skills which are in demand?

Asking these questions can help AEPs and partners identify what types of teachers are appropriate in their context.

Next, **consult with partners**, particularly CBOs and local leaders, about the availability of these qualities and skills. Use the information to begin identifying areas of teachers' knowledge that need boosting through training.

When recruiting, **select teachers using competency-based assessment**. Ask candidates to demonstrate teaching skills, and discuss their motivation for teaching. Where national competence criteria exist, use them to assess the teacher's performance when teaching a sample lesson.

[15] Please note that, when we refer to *Teachers*, we recognise that programmes may use other terms, such as educator, facilitator or animator.

Interviews with teachers will establish their motivation and approaches, as well as their awareness of child protection issues. Conduct a background check on teaching candidates where possible.

Where life skills and practical skills are in demand, but where teachers are unlikely to have these, investigate whether anyone in the local area can provide demonstrations to AEP learners.

Ensure all teachers agree to child safety and protection standards. This may mean having teachers sign a code of conduct that was developed in collaboration with teachers, or it may mean including an enforceable clause in a teacher's contract so the AEP can hold teachers accountable.

Teacher recruitment will depend on government policies and the availability of people who can teach in the operating context. For example, laws and regulations may restrict paying non-national refugee teachers in a camp setting.

Sometimes an AEP will prioritise unqualified or volunteer educators, for example, in situations where recruiting qualified teachers might put strain on an under-resourced and understaffed national education system, or where AEPs have an explicit intention of strengthening the system by training and qualifying more teachers. Other times, teachers who are already on the government payroll will be allocated to the programme. Or there may be a mix of volunteer, unqualified teachers and trained, certified teachers.

It might be necessary to use **teachers who are employed** already by schools. For instance, they might be free to teach in the afternoon, if their school teaches only in the mornings. However, teaching in the AEP could take time away from their marking and lesson preparations or extra-curricular activities for their main school. Make sure the teacher's school has given permission for them to take part in the AEP. Work closely with formal school management to reduce any negative impact. Using retired teachers can also be helpful. It is important that AEPs avoid recruiting teachers away from other institutions, as this can cause tensions.

Box 12. NRC Accelerated Education Programme, Dadaab, Kenya: Teacher training, support, and supervision

The NRC AEP in Dadaab, Kenya, employs both Kenyan national and Somali refugee teachers. The majority of teachers were strategically recruited from refugee communities and were required to possess a secondary school degree and English skills. NRC provides annual in-service training to its new teachers, facilitated in cooperation with Garissa Teachers' College, the Sub-County Education Commission, and the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development. This training structure exemplifies a cooperative approach to programming that utilises the expertise of national Kenyan actors, with external experts brought in by NRC.

At the school level, new teachers relied heavily on the support of fellow, experienced teachers. The Kenyan national teachers had all attained teacher certification at the university level, and many had considerable experience in the classroom. Mentorship and cooperation were formalised through minimum weekly meetings between certified and newer refugee teachers; younger refugee teachers noted the critical value of these relationships to their learning. Additionally, national teachers were able to supervise newer teachers for purposes of both accountability and support.

Adapted from: Flemming (2017)

Coordinate the salary for AEP teachers with other education actors – for example, through the education cluster or sector working group. This means considering the MoE and civil servant salary scale. Advocate for AEP teacher salaries that are appropriate when compared to teachers within government schools or humanitarian programmes, taking into account different levels of skill. However, "appropriate" AEP teacher salaries may not be equivalent to formal school teachers' salaries – AEPs should consider what is feasible and relevant in their context.

Box 13. Children in Crisis, Afghanistan: Addressing the challenge of recruiting female teachers through salary incentives

Because of the increased work demand, as well as the higher level of expertise and skill which Children in Crisis believes its teachers require to work within an AEP setting, teachers in its AEPs are paid more than double what a normal state school teacher would receive on a monthly basis. While this is out of line with the government's community-based education policy, the programme's justification is that otherwise it would struggle to maintain the level of quality that it does.

The higher salary, along with transportation incentives for female teachers, is also believed to be part of the reason that the programme is able to attract and retain qualified, experienced, female teachers. This is particularly important in Afghanistan, where the acute shortage of qualified female teachers is seen by development partners and the MoE as a significant barrier to girls' equal participation in schooling.

Adapted from: Shah (2017)

If teachers are recruited from a host community, incentives for transportation and/or accommodation may be required. For instance, if an AEP is implemented in a refugee camp and teachers have to relocate from cities to villages in that area, they may require financial and accommodation support for relocation. Or if teachers live in nearby villages, they may require daily transport to camps.

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Establishing **reliable payment mechanisms** and strong lines of **communication with teachers** is important. Since AEPs are often run for short timeframes, reducing disruption in teacher attendance or retention due to payment problems or perceptions that the salary is not competitive or secure is particularly important.

Once teachers' skills have been developed through initial training and practice, they are likely to find work as para-teachers or in other education programmes, especially if their existing programme appears to be coming to an end or their salaries are not being paid on time.

Several evaluations – such as of Save the Children's AEP in South Sudan (2015), the IBIS ALP in Central Equatoria (2012) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s AEP in Liberia (2011) – have reported that high **teacher turnover** was a particular problem in AEPs. This was often related to insufficient salary or erratic payments.

Work with relevant authorities to ensure AEP teachers are included on the official payroll, if appropriate. Where the national government is not able to pay AEP teachers, establish transparent mechanisms for payment at an early stage of the programme. Connect to existing monitoring and transparency systems to ensure timely payment, or make sure that teachers are regularly canvassed on how promptly they are paid.

It is also important to provide adequate supervision to teachers. This includes ensuring teachers arrive on time, every shift, and stay for the duration of their shift.

Teacher attendance is key for learners' success. According to Gillies and Quijada (2008), teacher absence can reduce potential student learning by 14 to 25 per cent. CECs can also help to supervise teachers' attendance.

Supervising teachers may also mean ensuring teachers complete all necessary documentation, including student attendance logs, grade books, schemes of work, lesson plans, and records of work. Teachers may need support to complete this documentation. This type of supervision can also be embedded within a process of teacher professional development (see Principle 5).

In Afghanistan, for example, the Children in Crisis Education Programme Manager plays an active role in supporting and monitoring teachers with these tasks. Assisting teachers in this way is critical, not only for programme quality purposes, but also because accurate record-keeping is often important for a programme's alignment with the formal education system. In the Children in Crisis case, the MoE regularly checks and verifies its registration, student attendance and examination records, and is the foundation on which AEP learners are able to have their learning recognised and to reintegrate into the formal education system.

Plan for some teachers to leave the AEP after a year or two. Other NGO programmes may offer better salaries, teachers may find jobs in schools as contract or para-teachers, some may have children or their families may move away. Prepare for unavoidable turnover by allocating a budget for regular training of replacement teachers.

PRINCIPLE 5

Teachers participate in continuous professional development

a. **Provide pre-service and continuous in-service teacher professional development courses on subject knowledge and Accelerated Learning pedagogy.**

b. **Build inclusion, gender-sensitivity and protection practices into the AEP teacher training.**

c. **Ensure teachers are provided with regular support and coaching to help improve the quality of classroom instruction.**

d. **Work directly with teacher training institutes and national structures for AEP teacher training in order to provide certified professional development for AEP teachers.**

If teachers lack key skills or knowledge, develop a **twin-track training package** which includes teaching methods (including Accelerated Learning pedagogy) and boosts content knowledge.

Teachers can be trained in Accelerated Learning pedagogy (see Principle 2), even if they lack formal teacher training. In fact, sometimes formally trained teachers struggle more with Accelerated Learning approaches than do untrained teachers, since their training most often teaches them to use traditional, lecture-style approaches. Both trained and untrained teachers will require substantial support to use more learner-centred methods.

The other track will be for boosting knowledge in essential content areas. In some contexts, where teachers have only lower primary or very weak upper primary education, this second track will cover most of the upper primary curriculum. It could also cover the written and spoken languages needed for teaching, as well as additional life skills.

Use the Training for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TPSTCC) package for the teaching methods component of an AEP teacher training programme.

If there is already a teaching methods training manual in place for AEP teachers – for example, as part of government policy or as a legacy from previous AEP projects – review the manual against the TPSTCC package and update it. If conflicting advice is found between the TPSTCC package and the planned training methods manual, resolve this among programme partners as soon as possible.

Teacher training should ensure that teachers learn critical information about child protection issues and responsibilities, as well as develop inclusive, gender-sensitive teaching practices (see Principle 3).

Ensure that regular, in-service professional development is provided to all teachers, including training on Accelerated Learning pedagogy and subject content. **Cluster-based training**, combined with centre-based supervision and support for teachers, is likely to be more effective than central, cascade training. Build in plenty of opportunity for practice and application of new teaching methods.

Teachers who experienced traditional, lecture-based pedagogies in their own education may struggle with unfamiliar learner-centred and inclusive approaches. Conflict- and crisis-affected education systems may lack capacity to provide training in Accelerated Learning methodologies. Building in staffing and time for ongoing support and supervision is key.

When possible, collaborate with teacher training institutes and national teacher training structures, so teachers develop nationally recognised knowledge and skills. Coordinating with certification bodies can also help teachers gain important certifications that can improve their teaching and help them find jobs after the AEP ends. This level of coordination can be very difficult to achieve but is an important long-term goal.

For example, in Kenya, NRC successfully partnered with a national university teachers' college, the national institute for curriculum development, and district level education authority to offer pre-service teacher training to its AEP teachers that aligned with national standards. In this case, AE-specific curriculum and pedagogy were taught by external NRC experts, while the teachers' college facilitators focused on their relevant areas of expertise, namely teaching methodologies for multi-age, multi-lingual, and multi-shift classrooms and systems of learning.

Box 14. Elements of effective AEP teacher training

Teacher training for AEPs needs to incorporate the following:

Child Protection and Code of Conduct. Ensure teachers are trained in child-protection basics and the teacher code of conduct, or a related, enforceable standard for child safety and protection.

Inclusion and gender sensitivity. Ensure training supports teachers to use inclusive, gender-sensitive practices in their teaching.

Accelerated Learning pedagogy. Incorporate the fundamentals of Accelerated Learning, which includes rights-based, learner-centred, activity-based teaching methods. Teacher training should model this methodology and be group-based, with activities, games and open discussions, as well as research and worksheets, so teachers can learn by doing.

Condensed Curriculum. Work with teachers on the concepts of compressed or condensed curricula, or the materials developed for teaching and learning, so that the teachers understand that a condensed curriculum:

- Eliminates the overlap and repetition of traditional subjects
- Uses the cross-fertilisation of subjects to reinforce rather than repeat
- Uses interactive teaching methodology to eliminate or minimise revision

Content-based Skills. Provide the opportunity for teachers to strengthen their skills in the content areas they will teach, if required.

Other considerations for AEP teacher training include:

- Teacher training should be interactive and based on discovery learning – aspects of teaching that the teachers themselves are supposed to implement.
- Training should consist of an initial 8-10-day training, with regular (twice-a-year) follow-ups of 3-5 days.
- Ensure a strong mentoring and support system for the teachers. This may include Teacher Learning Circles, observing other teachers, and collaborating on lesson plan development.

- Consistent and continuous professional development sessions and mentoring are important.
- Processes that maintain high teaching motivation – such as network training, peer-to-peer training, and pathways towards certification – need to be built into the teacher professional development programme.

Adapted from: Baxter & Bethke (2009)

In most crisis contexts, teachers will need considerable **support in planning learner-centred**, inclusive lessons which engage girls, boys, learners with disabilities, and those experiencing psychosocial issues. Teachers may need to be provided with as much teaching and learning material as possible. At least initially, they are unlikely to have the experience to produce their own materials (see Principle 4).

All AEP teachers benefit from regularly **meeting in groups and helping each other**. Teachers and trainers can be encouraged to come together at the centre- and cluster-level to discuss how to help learners who are struggling and how to vary their teaching techniques. Managers can schedule regular time for teachers to observe each other's lessons and offer constructive feedback.

Box 15. Meta-evaluation of NRC AEPs

In 2015, NRC conducted a meta-evaluation of their existing and prior AEPs. The meta-evaluation discovered, among other findings, that inexperienced teachers appreciated model lesson plans and similar resources.

Availability of appropriate teacher resources has been critical for teachers' sense of professional efficacy. There have been concerted efforts on the part of NRC to ensure that its AE teachers have the required resources and materials to do their job well.

While emphasis is also put into developing teacher- and student-made resources in many programmes, the existence of a clear and structured manual or guide, along the lines of the Teacher Emergency Package (TEP) pack, is highly appreciated and valued by teachers.

These teachers often enter the classroom without previous experience. Having a detailed, step-by-step guide for delivery of individual lessons, or at least a framework of model lessons, has been identified in several evaluations as affording them an important "crutch" to rely on at the outset.

Source: Shah (2015)

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Whenever possible, AEPs should negotiate with the government (and include in any memoranda of understanding) steps for the **accreditation of AEP teachers**, to facilitate their transition to full teaching status. This is a key contribution to the longer-term strengthening of the teaching workforce and wider system, and is likely to reduce AEP staff turnover.

Continuous teacher professional development is a challenge in all developing country contexts. In crisis and conflict, the difficulty can be even greater. AEPs should strive to offer a continuous professional development programme relevant to their teachers and beneficial to the larger workforce and education system, while making choices about what is feasible with the opportunities and challenges they face.

Box 16. Relief and Resilience through Education in Transition (RET) International, Secondary AEP: Teacher professional development

Before start-up, RET collaborated with the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development to conduct teacher needs assessment. The aims of this study were to evaluate the capacity of prospective teachers to: (1) implement AE pedagogical techniques; (2) demonstrate content knowledge; (3) utilise local resources; (4) teach learners with diverse needs; and (5) assess learning. This assessment was used as a foundation to develop the teacher training and professional development aspects of the programme.

Each year, before the school year begins, teachers participate in a pre-service orientation that helps them understand how the AEP is run, to know what types of documentation they will be expected to keep, and introduces them to AE teaching methods. In January every year, RET conducts a needs assessment which includes observations and a test to evaluate teachers' skills and needs. By March each year, RET brings in an AE specialist to implement in-service training to build the skills that were identified as priority needs.

RET also provides a small number of scholarships for education facilitators to pursue their B.Ed. at Mount Kenya University. Additional professional development support includes coaching by the RET Education Officer and the headmaster, as well as mentoring by more experienced teachers.

Most of the teachers (32 of 38) in the RET AEP are uncertified refugee teachers. RET also placed six Kenyan national, B.Ed.-level teaching interns in each of three AEP Centres and rotates them every month so that they can provide additional support to the refugee teachers.

Source: Boisvert (2017a)

PRINCIPLE 6

Goals, monitoring and funding align

a. Centre the overarching programme goal on increasing access, improving skills and ensuring certification.

b. Develop, apply, and regularly report using a monitoring and evaluation framework linked to programme goals and plans.

c. Make monitoring and evaluation systems for data compilation and analysis compatible with the MoE.

d. Ensure the programme is adequately funded to assure sustained minimum standards for infrastructure, staffing, supplies, supervision and management.

e. Include exit strategies and/or a sustainability plan in the AEP design.

The goals and targets of the AEP should centre on increasing access for over-age, out-of-school, disadvantaged children and youth, and should be guided by an initial education sector assessment and other background data (see Principle 10). AEPs may accomplish this via transition of students to formal schools at different entry points (after the completion of the AE cycle) or by offering an alternative certificate of completion. Questions, such as those below, may be useful in assessing the relevance of the AEP to the context.

- How well-founded is the evidence that an AEP meets the demand from targeted out-of-school groups for education access and skills?
- Does the theory of change and/or logical framework in the programme design reflect realistic working assumptions for the success of the AEP?

After the initial design, re-consult with out-of-school children and youth and their communities to check whether the approach is likely to meet their needs, and what changes are required.

Monitoring and evaluation specialists should be asked at an early stage to design and supervise a process for obtaining regular feedback and evidence on programme effectiveness on meeting goals and objectives, including consultations with students, front-line educators and community stakeholders. It will be useful to know:

- Whether an AEP is effective in meeting its objectives, compared to other ways of providing education to the same target groups
- What elements in the design and implementation of the AEP programme can be affordably improved, including, for example, recruitment and support of students, curriculum, materials, infrastructure, teacher recruitment, selection, training and support, management and communications, community engagement

In some settings, for example, AEP learner test results may be compared to those from government schools, but in others, the life circumstances of learners in AEPs and schools are too different for their test results to be meaningfully compared. Determining specific targets, such as test results, should be made based on context and learners, and align with overall programme goals. For example, the Learning for Life programme in Afghanistan created its own alternative tests to assess participant learning, with input from the MoE (see Box 23 in Principle 9). Regardless of planned comparisons, AEPs are best when they are designed to align with existing systems for data compilation, such as education management information system (EMIS), which support efforts to achieve Education for All and Sustainable Development Goals.

Evidence is useful only when set against clear objectives. AEPs have historically been weak in setting goals and targets and, in particular, rarely produce data demonstrating that the assumptions related to goals hold true in practice. Only once programme objectives and targets are clearly identified, can the forms and types of data to be collected specified (NORC, 2016).

Box 17. Goals and targets for girls' enrolment

The NORC review identified three effective ways of articulating gender goals in the AEP literature. In each example, there were specific enrolment targets for gender and, thus, programmes focused specifically on strategies for increasing girls' enrolment.

Targeting: Projects specifically target girls and women through a number of strategies. Two examples are: (a) Making the programme available to girls and women only, generally because they had previously been excluded and there was an identified need to help them compete on an equal basis in the formal school system (an example includes Udaan in India); and (b) Seeking out female teachers for all-girls or mixed classrooms. Examples of programmes that do this include BRAC Bangladesh and COPE Uganda.

Modelling behaviour and awareness: Some programmes, such as Udaan India and South Sudan SSIRI, also attempted to ensure (via teacher training and/or awareness raising) that classes had a constructive, inclusive approach where girls were called upon equally, teachers responded positively to girls' questions and comments, lessons included messages about equal rights, or community mobilisers sensitised local leaders to the importance of educating their girls.

Quotas: There were also programmes that included gender equity as a goal by mandating that specific percentages of beneficiaries must be female. This gender parity approach, particularly when it is programmed in isolation, is the weakest of the programme options.

Adapted from: NORC (2016)

AEPs should be **anchored in national budgets**. AEP programmers can collaborate with government officials on planning and budgeting in the immediate inception phase, when programming decisions that have long-term impact are being made. While a number of Education Sector Plans include AEPs, relatively few include specific budget lines. School for Life Ghana is an example of a programme that has successfully advocated for national education budgets to include AE.

Generating strong data on the relevance and impact of AEPs is the most effective way to secure funding after an initial phase. Establish clear understanding with the government and donors about what **evidence** they will need to continue or expand funding. In UNICEF's Liberia AEP, difficulties with securing follow-on funding led to teachers leaving the programme en masse for other schools, leaving learners stranded (Manda, 2011).

Using initial assessment and learning from community engagement (Principles 10 and 8), plan how the programme should identify and respond to financial issues which are likely to keep learners from attending. If, for example, **cash transfers** or similar incentive schemes are needed to reduce widespread cost barriers, bring in specialists in developing cash transfers or link the AEP to well-established cash transfer programmes. Full **assessment of cash transfer schemes** prior to implementation will ensure they are appropriate.

Such schemes can have unintended consequences, such as attracting learners out of mainstream schools and into AEPs, and causing learners to drop out after they transfer to other education settings when incentives are not available. If such an approach is deemed appropriate for the context, it will be necessary to budget accordingly.

In addition to the usual good practice issues for programme budgeting, there are several **budget, cost and monitoring** considerations are specific to AEPs.

Those may include:

- Annual per learner recurrent costs need to be considered, such as enrolment costs, teacher and supervisor salaries, supervision and training, management (including CECs) and operations (rentals, fuel, overheads). Indirect costs such as uniforms, transportation and learning materials need to be covered, either partially or fully.
- Communities may supply land and other infrastructure, labour and materials. Capital costs to expect may include classrooms, educator accommodation, water and sanitation facilities.
- Significant start-up costs – including facilities, vehicles, curriculum development, materials, community and radio campaigns, and local/international consultants – need to be considered.
- Cash transfers and other incentives, such as feeding programmes (which may be provided by partners such as the World Food Programme), need budgeting for delivery, management and monitoring.
- Small, flexible budget lines to support the special needs of learners are a good idea, particularly for those affected by disability. Some learners may need wheelchairs or other assistive devices, and many need support for reading glasses to be able to learn. Such a budget line can be managed through a grant fund for centre committees to control and supplement with community contributions, or through direct allocation to teachers and learners by AEP management, based on teachers' recommendations and discussions.
- The cycle of learners through the AEP should be considered alongside funding and budget cycle planning. Funding should not end or diminish before learners are ready for transition to formal schools.

There can be significant challenges to the **procurement of teaching and learning materials**, which will have disproportionate impact on the tight timeframes of AEPs.

Manufacturers may be unable to produce orders at short notice, and finding good translators for local-language materials may be difficult. AEP centres may not be part of central supply routes and delivery arrangements for mainstream schools. Learners may drop out if teaching does not begin as planned, or if delivery failures cause communities to lose trust. This is a particular problem with an accelerated curriculum, when delays mean double the learning will be lost.

Detailed **advanced planning** will reduce these risks. Back-up plans can be made to support teaching in the event of extreme weather or conflict causing delays to the delivery of

materials. It may be possible to make photocopies of materials locally, or share basic information with teachers through mobile phone networks, using SMS or MMS. Nearby formal schools may have materials that could be borrowed and adapted. Prioritising communication and collaboration around material supply will maximise recovery from such delays. In many countries, UNICEF has taken responsibility for the country-wide provision of textbooks. AEP providers can advocate with UNICEF to have AEP material added to their national distribution.

Box 18. Afghanistan Primary Education Programme (APEP): Procurement and delivery of materials

Several AEPs have reported **challenges with procurement and delivery of materials**, which have compromised key relationships. The Afghanistan APEP experienced procurement issues that were worsened by gaps in funding, weaknesses in supplier capacity, and challenges with terrain in remote areas. Forty-five per cent of AE classes operated in rural, remote and mountainous areas that were annually cut off from transportation for months at a time. Implementing partners delivered reduced kits (including books) by foot (and camel) travel over mountainous passes in time for the first days of school.

When the reduced kits for teachers and students were distributed, there was tension between the communities and implementing partners, as communities interpreted the limited supplies as evidence of corruption and skimming of materials. The inclusion in the Trainer's Manuals and Mentor's Guides of comprehensive kits' lists and necessary changes due to the logistical challenges helped allay the communities' concerns.

Source: Nicholson (2006b)

Outlining a clear **exit strategy** in the programme design is important, but it is worth noting that the actual circumstances surrounding the termination of an AEP will be context-specific and, thus, often changing and challenging to predict. There are four common exit circumstances observed for AEPs that differ based on funding and continued demand:

1. Funding dries up and the AEP either ends (often abruptly) or continues under-funded.
2. Funding is extended and the AEP continues beyond its initial cycle. These long-term AEPs continue while there is sustained demand (i.e., there are still large numbers of over-age, out-of-school children and youth).
3. Funding for the programme diversifies, ultimately engulfed by the government's official sector strategy. This is seen, for example, in the BRAC AEP in Bangladesh and School for Life in northern Ghana.
4. The need and demand for AEP declines as an increasingly high percentage of children enter and complete primary education. In this context, AEPs either end or are absorbed into the formal school system.

While AEPs may end abruptly (due to ceased funding or unpredicted changes in context), it is important for an exit strategy to be firmly in place. As part of this strategy, thought must be given as to whether the need for AEPs will continue beyond the life of the current programme, or whether all out-of-school children will have been reintegrated into formal schooling after a finite period. If the former, then efforts should start early on considering how responsibility for AE provision can be transferred to communities, other partners, or district and/or national education authorities. This might include intentionally training teachers to take on leadership roles in the programme, supporting community leaders into programme management roles, and/or coordinating a staged process for handover of the AEP to education authorities.

PRINCIPLE 7

AE centre is effectively managed

a. **Ensure fiscal, supervisory, monitoring and evaluation systems are in place.**

b. **Set up systems for student record keeping and documentation with data to monitor progress on student enrolment, attendance, dropout, retention, completion, and learning, disaggregated by gender and age group.**

c. **Set up systems to track AEP students who have completed in regard to their transition/integration to formal education, vocational training and/or employment.**[16]

d. **Ensure the community education committee (CEC) is representative of the community, trained and equipped to support AE management.**

[16] For monitoring and evaluation (M&E) purposes, it is useful to track former students in order to assess programme impact. In reality, this is often not possible for programmes beyond the initial enrolment of AEP graduates into formal schools. It is important to note that this is aspirational.

The AEP should be effectively managed in alignment with programmatic goals (see Principle 6); this includes establishment of fiscal, supervisory and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Box 19. Children in Crisis Community Based Education Centres: Effective management

Children in Crisis (CiC) Community Based Education Centres (CBEC) are set up with an explicit focus on improving access to education for out-of-school IDP and marginalised populations living in Kabul's informal settlements, and ensuring they earn a basic education qualification at the completion of the three-year AEP.

The programme regularly collects student data – at the time of student enrolment – and throughout and following the programme by tracking attendance on a daily basis, student performance on both midterm and final exams, dropout rates (and reasons for these), and obtaining information on post-programme outcomes for students. Given that accurate record keeping is the focus of monitoring visits by Ministry officials, the Education Programme Manager spends significant time ensuring records are kept in order, and are updated monthly. Broader trends in student dropout, attendance, exam performance and completion are analysed regularly for formative programme learning and improvement. Each centre also employs a Team Leader, who assists the Education Programme Manager with record-keeping, and by maintaining strong links with the local community.

At the outset, and on an ongoing basis, the Team Leader and Education Programme Manager meet with local police, civic authorities, and religious leaders to ensure that they are aware of the programme's planned activities in the community and to ensure they have their support.

On a monthly basis, team leaders at the CBECs respond to the needs of individual children and women who are stopped from attending, to convince families (male relatives especially) to change their minds and let their children/girls/women attend.

Finally, while the CBECs administer their own Grade 6 examination, they work closely with district education officials to facilitate transfer of CBEC students into the relevant next grade level in the formal schooling system (if they drop out in the middle) or into the nearest state school at Grade 7 (for those who complete the full cycle). The clear memorandum of understanding (MoU) and close cooperation in place between CiC and the MoE ensures that almost all students who do complete the full cycle do, in fact, have the ability to enter into the nearest state school in Grade 7. It also ensures that students' learning in the AEP is formally recognised as equivalent by the MoE, as stipulated under the MoU.

Source: Shah (2017)

Set up regular **collection and reporting of data** on enrolment, attendance, dropout rates and selected learning outcomes. Develop a shared understanding of how each term is defined and measured. Ensure that this data is disaggregated by gender, age group and disability in order identify impact on the specific out-of-school groups targeted by the programme.

Programme management may use attendance data, in particular barriers and challenges to student attendance, to determine whether budgetary or logistical changes are needed. This can be done through regular review of CEC meeting notes, participatory programme reviews, and meetings between programme management and representatives of community committees.

It is useful to arrange meetings with primary or secondary schools and vocational colleges to **coordinate their intake** of AEP graduates. The AEP may provide individual learner profiles to formal school principals as a basis for discussion on the interests and priorities of each learner, as well as the likely needs they will have on entering formal school. A school/college welcome day can be organised for graduating AEP learners shortly before the term starts to help them feel comfortable in the school environment and get to know teachers, school rules and processes.

For large-scale AEPs, it is critical to work closely with formal schools to ensure there are sufficient spaces available for integrating students. In some contexts, for example in Dadaab, Kenya, a lack of spaces in the formal primary schools led to students remaining in NRC's AEP for the duration of the primary education cycle. Students were then eligible for integration at the secondary level.

Many AEP evaluations have identified the value of **tracking graduates** to produce evidence on whether AEP leavers are achieving intended further education or employment. This information is vital to know whether AEPs are fit for purpose. AEPs should aim to keep records on graduates and dropouts for six months after they leave, wherever possible. Learners can be asked to give contact details (such as mobile phone numbers for themselves or relatives) to the AEP upon exit, so that evaluators can follow up. This will be particularly useful if learners or communities are likely to move around.

CECs should be trained and supported in their role. The term CEC is used here to designate and emphasise the management responsibilities and roles that the community plays in the implementation of the AEP.[17] Depending on the context, the CEC may have significantly different levels of involvement, responsibility, and mechanisms of accountability for the AEP. CECs are accountable to the structures that govern and guide the AEP, and their decisions and actions should align with the goals of the programme.

[17] CECs may be referred to by different names across contexts; for example, parent–teacher association (PTA), school management committee (SMC) or school management board (SMB).

In the UNICEF Liberia AEP, the primary responsibilities of the CEC were targeted enrolment of students, household follow-up for dropouts and poor attendance, and continued sensitisation of community members about the goals and targets of the AEP. In other instances, school management committees (comprised of community members as well as programme managers) may take primary control of monitoring, supervision of teachers, and reporting mechanisms. See Principle 8 for more information on engaging communities.

Additionally, **building the capacity of local education authorities to supervise** and monitor AEPs may lead to sustainability and increased effectiveness. Such was the case for IBIS in South Sudan, which is elaborated on in Box 20.

Box 20. IBIS South Sudan: Strengthening local capacity

IBIS best practices in education systems strengthening included:

- Conducting capacity-building of local government officials in education management and administration through on-the-job training
- Supporting practical skill development of AEP teachers through continuous formative supervision in key pedagogical areas
- Training and seconding government counterparts as technical education staff to facilitate knowledge and skills transfer in local government offices
- Conducting on-site mentoring and supervision by IBIS AEP trainers of 20 education staff from state, county and *payam* Education Offices
- Providing government counterparts from each county with intensive, on-going capacity-building from IBIS in teacher training, monitoring and support supervision. IBIS used their formative supervision and CPD model towards community advocacy for education, AES management and administration and monitoring and evaluation of education programmes. Counterparts then worked with IBIS staff and local government officials to implement and monitor the ALP.

Source: IBIS (2012)

PRINCIPLE 8

Community is engaged and accountable

a. Ensure the AEP is located within a community that supports and contributes to the programme.

b. Ensure the AEP is locally led and, when necessary, technical expertise is provided externally.

c. Provide comprehensive community sensitisation on the benefits of AEPs.

d. In areas with frequent movements of internally displaced persons and/or refugees, conduct continuous needs assessments and community sensitisation on education.

Locating AEP centres close to where learners and their communities live is essential, as enrolment and attendance for education generally are impacted by proximity to schools. For example, a World Bank research project found that in the western Sahelian region of Chad, 80 per cent of enrolled children came from the 8 per cent of villages that had schools located in them.

For AEP success and sustainability, **community engagement is critical** from the start. This engagement often comes in the form of an organised community education committee[18] or **community outreach workers**. These groups or individuals provide an essential link between the AEP and communities, ensuring that the programme is both appropriately managed and relevant to the context. Effective community engagement via such organisation includes sensitisation and awareness campaigns, especially those that emphasise the benefits of education (particularly for girls), as well as active participation in programme planning and management. In some locations, CECs may already exist, in which case they may provide an important entry point for AEPs. Where they do not exist, they should be established with local support and broad, inclusive representation.

Box 21. Schools for Life, Ghana: Modelling equity and inclusion

CECs can model equity and inclusion via their own strategic makeup. This has been the case in Ghana's Schools for Life where women make up the majority of representatives on the committee and take leading roles. The committee ensures that at least 50 per cent of enrolled learners are girls. Fostering the successful involvement of girls in AEPs can require house-to-house visits by CEC members, as well as dedicated and continued community sensitisation campaigns.

Source: Hartwell (2006)

Some AEPs use **outreach workers** instead of CECs to identify and support children who may not enrol or are at risk of dropping out, as well as to raise community awareness of the importance of education. These individuals should be known and trusted by the community and highly familiar with the context.

CECs may be given responsibility for selecting appropriate accommodation for the AEP, identifying learners and facilitating their enrolment (especially the most vulnerable), determining timetables and, in some cases, recruiting teachers to the programme. Fostering good relationships between CECs, programme staff and teachers is important. Additionally, communities may be asked to provide in-kind or actual resources as a prerequisite for establishing an AEP. For example, the TEACH programme in Ethiopia required communities to donate land for the construction of their education centres (Ethio-Education Consultants, 2008).

[18] As previously stated, a CEC can refer to a parent–teacher Association (PTA), school management board (SMB), or other, similarly organised, groups.

CECs can also mobilise external funding, manage resources (teaching and learning materials, book banks, etc.), organise safe transport for vulnerable children or those with mobility issues, feed-back issues and challenges to AEP teachers or managers, and monitor learner and teacher attendance. CECs have a role to play in child protection, including ensuring AEP learning spaces are safe and protective environments.

AEP community committees can be trained to identify and act on issues affecting attendance or learning in a constructive way. They may, for example, mobilise resources to help the poorest, or disabled learners who need equipment like wheelchairs, attend school.

Box 22. NRC AEP, Dadaab Kenya: Fostering community engagement and support

The NRC AEP in Dadaab, Kenya highlights the importance of community engagement and advocacy, both for the overall success of the programme and for ensuring access for the most vulnerable children.

The primary responsibilities of the CEC include identifying out-of-school children (with particular emphasis on girls), building relationships with parents and other community members, and continued sensitisation on the importance and benefits of both the AEP, specifically, and education, generally. When attendance issues arise, teachers worked closely with the CEC members to reach out to parents, identify potential barriers and challenges, cooperatively work to overcome them, and ensure learners return to school.

Additionally, with regular arrival of new refugees in the camps of Dadaab, persistent advocacy and community sensitisation is essential. Since the CEC is embedded within these local communities, its members are able to quickly identify new families (and potentially new students) and target them for outreach, needs assessment, and enrolment.

Concentrated efforts to maintain and increase community support for the AEP are critical to sustaining the programme in the future and ensuring community members send their children to school and keep them there.

Source: Flemming (2017)

Programme monitoring should **promote community accountability**, often coordinated through the CECs. It is good practice to consult communities, and learners living within those communities, about all AEP implementation and management issues, and to support communities to build relationships with district education officials where these do not already exist. Such partnerships with district-level education officials are as essential to the AEP as cooperation with the MoE or national-level education authority. This is particularly true in contexts with decentralised state structures, where such cooperation is critical for both monitoring purposes and integration of AEP students to the formal sector.

Training and ongoing support of PTAs/CECs can be helpful as they take on new roles and responsibilities. Key areas for training/support include financial accountability and administration, participatory leadership and child protection. Capacity building in income generation will help CECs and the wider community to sustain their role beyond the life of the AEP. For examples of training manuals and guidance notes, see ESSPIN Nigeria's School Based Management Committee Training Manual and INEE Good Practice Guide: Community Education Committees.

Responding to population movements in a context is also important. In areas with frequent movement of refugees and internally displaced persons, community sensitisation and outreach efforts may need to occur with greater frequency. Additionally, in such contexts, the needs or demographic makeup of the population may change, which affects the ability of the AEP to deliver relevant and appropriate services. For AEPs in such contexts, it is important to consider the frequency of needs assessments and other community outreach efforts.

Communities can be resistant to, or lack interest in, AEPs. This may happen, for example, when girls' enrolment is emphasised or if anticipated results do not materialise. Additionally, tensions between the community and the AEP can arise when there are unrealistic or unmet expectations of learner progression and accreditation or certification.

CECs can effectively monitor community perceptions and regularly feed back challenges and misunderstandings to the AEP implementers. Regular cooperation and communication amongst programme management, teachers, and the CECs can help to quickly resolve misperceptions or programme missteps.

PRINCIPLE 9

AEP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education

a. **Include strategies and resources that ensure AEP learners can register for, and sit, examinations that provide a nationally recognised certificate.**

b. **Develop clear pathways that enable children and youth to reintegrate in a corresponding level in the formal system, vocational education or employment.**

c. **If national and annual examinations do not exist, develop assessment systems with the MoE that enable children to be tested and reintegrated at an appropriate level in the formal system.**

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At an early stage, AEPs should negotiate agreement between the MoE and schools for the accreditation needed to certify AEP learners' attainment so as to facilitate their entry into the formal education system, training or employment. For example, aim to have AEP learners take formal primary examinations upon leaving the AEP in order to achieve primary completion status. If a junior secondary school or basic education exam exist, work with MoE to have learners sit for the appropriate exam. In Liberia, ALP learners sat for the West Africa Examination Council primary examination (Nkutu, Bang, & Tooman, 2010); in 2016, AEP learners in Dadaab, Kenya (both primary and secondary) sat for Kenyan national exams.

Aim for learners to take a **mock certificate test** in the final phase of an AEP cycle – if appropriate, the same test as the national examination. For the RET Secondary AEP in Dadaab, Kenya, this had two noted benefits: (a) students practised taking an exam that was similar in format to the national examination; and (b) the AEP was able to identify students who may need extra support ahead of the formal certification tests.

Official testing should take place soon after the AEP cycle has been completed, and with enough time for learners to move smoothly into the next stage of education. Delays between the end of AEP cycles and the **scheduling of primary leaving exams** led to poor test performance and lower transition into education for AEP graduates in South Sudan (IBIS, 2012).

Teachers and AEP management need to plan extra support when necessary prior to testing. This may include both academic and logistic support. Determine where extra explanation or practice is needed, and whether learners will have trouble attending tests. Arrange testing at convenient and accessible places and times, and provide transportation to test locations when possible.

Box 23. Learning for Life, Afghanistan: Developing alternative assessments

The Learning for Life (LFL) AEP in Afghanistan developed an alternative test to evaluate participant learning. The purpose of the test was:

- To indicate the extent to which the project facilitated participant learning of the health-focused literacy curriculum as measured by participant test scores.
- To identify participants who learned the equivalent content of formal school grades 1 to 3 curriculum and certify this learning by the MoE. This certification allowed for application, without further testing, to grade 4 classes.
- To identify participants who learned the equivalent content of formal school grades 4 to 6 curriculum – these learners were then eligible to take the entrance examinations for grades 5, 6 or 7.

The LFL learner test and testing procedures were in line with those used in other literacy programmes, as well as in the formal education system at the grade 1 to 3 level in Afghanistan. Development of the test questions was provided to the MoE for input, and was piloted in multiple locations. Ultimately, the MoE agreed to certify as grade 1 to 3 equivalent those learners who successfully completed the LFL Foundations Level One test.

Source: Anastacio/USAID (2006)

In certain contexts, aligning AEP content to national standards and examinations may conflict with certain foundational goals and characteristics of the programme, such as flexibility and AE pedagogy and curriculum. AEPs may experience tensions between many of the Principles, as well as between Principles and Action Points, as programmes are planned and implemented. Often, these tensions relate to alignment with national systems and AEPs must determine their own best course of action based on the particular context. Box 24 offers examples of such tensions noted during the Guide's field testing.

Box 24. Tensions and contextualisation of principles in Kenya, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone

In Afghanistan, NGOs are required to work within the existing policy framework set out for AEPs in the Community Based Education Policy if they are to obtain a MoU from the MoE. This policy has a high level of specificity when it comes to the timetabling, scheduling, and curriculum coverage. It significantly reduces programmes' ability to be flexible to the needs of learners but having this MoU typically allows learners to be accredited and enter into the formal education system on completion. The result is that AEPs in Afghanistan end up being aligned with Ministry policy, but with little scope to be flexible, particularly in relation to curriculum.

In Kenya, AEPs are required to use the Kenyan Non-formal Education (NFE) curriculum, which does not contain AE-specific curriculum or pedagogy. AE students in such programmes are then able to sit national examinations and often perform very well. However, this alignment with national standards affects AEPs' agency in utilising AE-specific pedagogy, curriculum or materials. Pressure to assure that students receive national accreditation means that assessed subjects are prioritised and often flexibility in scheduling and timetabling poses challenges for programmes.

Alignment with one of the Principles often correlates with a lesser alignment with another, related, Principle.

Source: Shah, Flemming, & Boisvert (2017)

PRINCIPLE 10

AEP is aligned with the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture

a. Integrate research on out-of-school and over-age children *within* education sector assessments so that supply and demand issues related to AEP are explored, analysed and prioritised.

b. Develop strategies and processes to engender political will, identify resources and integrate AEP into the national education system.

c. Develop clear competency-based frameworks for monitoring progress and achievement by level, based on national education system or relevant humanitarian architecture curricula.

d. Use certified MoE material where available.

e. Seek provision for financial support for AEPs within national or sub-national education budgets.

f. In a humanitarian context, work with the Education Cluster or appropriate sector/donor coordination group to ensure the AEP is part of a coordinated sector response.

AEPs are most successful when **integrated into the wider education system** and recognised by the government or relevant education authority. This is true even where such systems are weak and where AEPs are implemented and/or funded by other organisations. AEPs can support the strengthening of the wider education system when approved and accredited by the government or relevant education authority, and aligned with national curriculum and assessment content and procedures. Many governments incorporate AEPs into education sector plans.

Tensions may arise between national or district authorities and AEP implementers when AEPs are viewed mainly as alternatives to the formal education system. In Kenya, AEP students often scored higher on national examinations than Kenyan students, which led to complications in advocating for budgeting for AEPs. If there are national teacher shortages, it is critical for AEPs to not pull teachers away from the formal sector.

In some countries, long-term AEPs are classified under non-formal education and play an integral role in delivering Education for All. Whichever approach is taken, ideally AEPs are embedded in the education system and supported by communities.

In many countries, NGO/UN and government AEPs run side by side, or the government works closely with non-government partners and donor agencies to oversee AEPs. In Ghana, Schools for Life successfully tackled the major challenge of out-of-school children in the northern region over 20 years, stimulating demand for formal education. The approach's success provided a scalable model for the Ghana Education Service to roll out countrywide (NRC/Bernasconi, 2015).

Sierra Leone's Complementary Rapid Education Programme (Johannessen, 2005) and South Sudan's Accelerated Learning Programme (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Republic of South Sudan, August 2014) are examples of long-running AEPs with full government ownership.

Box 25. Sierra Leone: National education sector planning

Sierra Leone's 2014-2018 Education Sector Plan, Learning to Succeed, identifies AEPs for over-age children as a key intervention to support primary school enrolment and completion.

According to the Plan, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will partner with other non-state actors to provide accelerated primary education for older children and youth between the ages of 10 and 15 years old. This would allow learners to complete the primary school curriculum in three years rather than the usual six years. This model was used successfully immediately after the war to educate many of the young people who had missed out on schooling. The courses would be offered through already existing community education centres or in existing schools using trained facilitators. Those who complete the three years will be eligible to take the end of primary school exams and transition to junior secondary schools.

Source: Government of Sierra Leone (2014)

When planning an AEP, carry out an **education sector assessment**. This includes analysis of government systems, and gaps and weaknesses in provision; existing agencies working in education and their programmes; and community needs. It also includes engaging with relevant stakeholders to agree on policies and approaches. Find out if such an assessment has already taken place as part of existing education sector planning and policy development. Use this information to guide AEP design and implementation. **For an example of an education assessment tool for crisis and conflict settings, see** USAID ECCN's RERA tool.

Box 26. Education sector assessment

An education sector assessment describes the education system using data and indicators from EMIS and provides an analysis of successes, weaknesses and difficulties. Additional information can be collected via surveys (or other exit research) only when existing evidence is insufficient, and only for key areas. A sector analysis can be a summary or an update of the main issues identified. Consulting all key stakeholders during the analysis helps to build a strong diagnosis and agreement on key issues, main determining factors, and tentative conclusions.

Key areas to cover include:

- Context, including macro-economic, demographic, socio-cultural and vulnerability analysis
- Existing policy environment
- Costs and financing
- Education system performance and capacity

It may not be possible to collect all the missing data in the available time. If so, one component of the AEP may be advocacy for the development of a comprehensive information system. The absence of complete data sets need not deter the planning process if well-argued designs can be made on the basis of the available data.

Adapted from: UNESCO and Global Partnership for Education (2015)

Investing time and effort in strong **partnerships** is a key factor in the success of an AEP. The APEP Afghanistan programme found that strong collaboration and regular contact between consortium representatives at different levels generated good understanding of what the work should involve, and built resilience and co-ordination when funding was interrupted. If an opportunity arises to establish an AEP in a new area, convene a group of partners to oversee development of the programme. This helps to ensure harmonisation and set standards for quality, accountability, and certification, across all the education service providers.

Such partnership groups include:

- The government and MoE
- Well-networked, credible local NGOs and CBOs; a managing agency (whether a department of the MoE, a national or international NGO or contractor, or a UN agency)
- Teacher training institutions, teacher or school representation
- Financial, monitoring and research experts with education expertise (ideally staff embedded in implementing agencies)
- Local communities

Establish **partner roles and agreements** from the start. In addition to routine contractual arrangements between donors and implementing agencies, a MoU with the government is advisable. This formalises the common agreement, intention and course of action between parties. Operational details can be covered by an additional protocol. These measures can protect AEPs against high staff and ministerial turnover in fragile contexts.

Support ownership, cooperation and consensus through regular management and education meetings. Capacity building and knowledge sharing among partners can be key to a programme's success. Cluster meetings, sector coordination meetings, and non-formal education working group meetings are often the venues for this dialogue.

In situations of **humanitarian crisis**, it is good practice to ensure AEPs are part of the coordinated response for providing education to affected populations, including IDPs and refugees.

The Education Cluster, or the appropriate donor coordination group, is an open formal forum for coordination and collaboration on education in emergencies. It is led by UNICEF and Save the Children and mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Working with the Education Cluster ensures a coordinated education response to emergency and helps plan how the AEP will be integrated into on-going education development initiatives. The Cluster works closely with key partners, such as INEE, to share standards, technical resources and guidance, and with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) on bridging humanitarian and development financing and co-ordination.

The Cluster contributes to the development of Humanitarian Response Plans. Including AEPs in these plans is important for securing funding. Working with the Cluster maximises potential to build partnerships and engage with members ready to commit resources (staff, expertise, products, funding) to activities that help realise the Cluster work plan. For an AEP, this might include partnerships with World Food Programme for school feeding, UNICEF for supplies, and so on.

Conclusion

The AEWG emphasises both the importance of looking at the 10 Principles holistically and understanding the aspirational nature of these Principles. While it may be unrealistic for a programme to meet all Principles from the outset, AEPs should work towards these aims. Programmes should operationalise and contextualise relevant and useful Action Points while aspiring towards the overall goal of increasing educational access for over-age, out-of-school, disadvantaged children and youth.

Alongside this, it is recognised that a number of inherent tensions exist between Principles and amongst Action Points. It is important for programmes to recognise that such tensions may be unavoidable, especially in crisis- and conflict-affected environments and while working with national authorities. Those implementing, funding and setting direction for AEPs must contextualise and prioritise both Principles and Action Points to their setting and target population, and make informed decisions with learner's best interests in mind – particularly when tensions or contradictions arise.

Finally, the AEWG is developing additional tools that can assist users of the Principles in designing, monitoring and evaluating AEPs based on the AE Principles. We anticipate publishing these tools in 2018 on the INEE and the ECCN websites. Tools will include Theory of Change for Accelerated Education, a menu of indicators, monitoring tools, and a Logical Framework.

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LEARNERS

TEACHERS

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

ALIGNMENT WITH MoE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS